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For Immediate Release

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SUPERVISOR RICE CALLS FOR INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING PROCESS

Reform Designed to Instill Transparency and Uniform Standards

April 8, 2010...Milwaukee, WI – Milwaukee County Supervisor Joseph A. Rice testified today before the Committee on Judiciary, Safety and General Services in support of a resolution he has introduced to revise the process by which Milwaukee County supervisory districts are drawn.

The resolution calls for the redistricting process to be conducted by a five member, non-partisan commission nominated by the Milwaukee County Ethics Board. The commission would hold public hearings and present its redistricting plan to the County Board for approval by a two-thirds majority. In the event the County Board was unable to pass a plan, responsibility would be transferred to the Milwaukee County Corporation Counsel's Office.

Milwaukee County is required every ten years to re-draw its electoral districts to adjust for changes in population, ensuring that each supervisor represents an equal number of citizens. The proposed resolution aims to remove political considerations by having an independent commission perform the redistricting, thus ensuring a fair and evenhanded redistricting process.

"It is extremely important to keep this process impartial and depoliticized," Supervisor Rice said. "Under the current system, county lawmakers are essentially drawing up their own districts, thus getting to choose their constituency," Rice added.

Entrusting the redistricting of Milwaukee County to an independent commission not only removes politics but helps guide adherence to the principles of competitiveness, continuity and compactness of the districts.

"Milwaukee County can become a model for other jurisdictions by making this process clean, uncluttered, and open to public inspection," Rice concluded.